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CLIMATE CHANGE

Learning from State Action on Climate Change.

Pew Center on Global Climate Change, June 2006 Update

<http://www.pewclimate.org/docUploads/States%20Brief%20June%202006%2Epdf>

The Pew Center on Global Climate Change has updated the previous study on state action on climate change. States have taken the lead on developing climate policies and initiatives. They are setting emission reduction targets, mandating investment in renewables and energy efficiency, and developing plans to mitigate climate change. State governments cite a variety of reasons for action, including promoting economic development, reducing vulnerability to fluctuating energy prices, and preventing damages to the states' resources from climate change.

Surface Temperature Reconstructions for the Last 2,000 Years.

National Research Council, June 2006

<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/11676.html#toc>

After a comprehensive review of climate-change data, the pre-eminent U.S. scientific body found average temperatures on Earth have risen about 1 degree over the past century, a development that "is unprecedented for the last 400 years and potentially the last several millennia."

"There is nothing in this report that should raise any doubts about the broad scientific consensus on global climate change ... or any doubts about whether any paper on the temperature records was legitimate scientific work," said Rep. Sherwood Boehlert, R-N.Y., chairman of the House Science Committee, who had requested the study.

ALTERNATIVE FUELS

Biofuels for Transportation: Global Potential and Implications for Sustainable Agriculture and Energy in the 21st Century. Selected Trends and Facts.

Worldwatch Institute, June 2006

<http://www.worldwatch.org/node/4081/print>

Biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel can significantly reduce global dependence on oil, according to this report by the Worldwatch Institute. The report is a comprehensive assessment of the opportunities and risks associated with the large-scale international development of biofuels. It includes information from existing country studies on biofuel use in Brazil, China, Germany, India, and Tanzania.

A High Growth Strategy for Ethanol.

David W. Monsma, Report of an Aspen Institute Policy Dialogue, June 2006

<http://www.aspeninstitute.org/atf/cf/{DEB6F227-659B-4EC8-8F84-8DF23CA704F5}/EEEethanol1.pdf>

The Aspen Institute convened a group of leaders from government and the farm, environmental, energy, security and academic communities who met for two and a half days at Wye Woods in late March to discuss the potential of biofuels to improve energy security, the environment, and the economy. Co-chaired by Booz Allen Hamilton Vice President and former CIA Director R. James Woolsey and former Congressman Tom Ewing (R. IL), they developed a series of recommendations to stimulate the widespread commercialization of both corn and cellulosic ethanol as a replacement for gasoline.

"Boutique Fuels" and Reformulated Gasoline: Harmonization of Fuel Standards.

Brent D. Yacobucci, Congressional Research Service, updated May 10, 2006

<http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/crs/rl31361.pdf>

Because of federal and state programs to improve air quality, and local refining and marketing decisions, suppliers of gasoline face many different standards for fuel quality. As a result, fuels are formulated to meet varying standards. State and local decisions overlap with federal requirements, leading to situations where adjacent or nearby areas may have significantly different standards. These various fuel formulations are often referred to as "boutique fuels." In this system, supply disruptions can result if fuel from one area cannot be used to supply another area. This report discusses how gasoline composition is regulated and explains the various federal and state gasoline standards. Next, the report presents some of the key issues with the federal reformulated gasoline (RFG) program. Some of the problems associated with boutique fuels are discussed, as well as some of the potential effects of harmonization. Finally, congressional actions in the 109th Congress related to boutique fuels, RFG, and harmonization are discussed.

TRANSPORTATION

Bringing Transportation into a Cap-and-Trade Regime.

A.D. Ellerman, H.D. Jacoby & M.B. Zimmerman, June 2006

http://web.mit.edu/globalchange/www/MITJPSPGC_Rpt136.pdf

The U.S. may at some point adopt a national cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gases, and if and when that happens the system of CAFE regulation of vehicle design very likely could still be in place. Imposed independently these two systems can lead to economic waste. One way to avoid the inefficiency is to integrate the two systems by allowing emissions trading between them. Two possible approaches to potential linkage are explored here, along with a discussion of ways to guard against violation under such a trading regime of vehicle standards that may be justified by non-climate objectives. At a minimum implementation of a U.S. cap-and-trade system is several years in the future, so we also suggest intermediate measures that would gain some of the advantages of an integrated system and smooth the way to ultimate interconnection

HEALTH

Toxic Chemicals and Children's Health in North America.

Commission for Environmental Cooperation, May 2006

http://www.cec.org/pubs_docs/documents/index.cfm?varlan=english&ID=1965

This report from the NAFTA-affiliated Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC) calls on the U.S., Canada, and Mexico to enhance efforts aimed at understanding the sources, levels of exposure, and risks to children's health from industrial chemicals, but offers mostly general recommendations on how to do so.

According to the report, 1998-2002 (the period under review) saw declines in North America in the release of known carcinogens (26%), recognized developmental and reproductive toxicants (28%), suspected developmental and reproductive toxicants (7%), and suspected neurotoxicants (11%).

WATER

Clean Water: How States Allocate Revolving Loan Funds and Measure Their Benefits.

Report to the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, GAO, June 2006

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06579.pdf>

Since 1987, states have used 96 percent (about \$50 billion) of their Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) dollars to build, upgrade, or enlarge conventional wastewater treatment facilities and conveyances. Projects to build or improve wastewater treatment plants alone account for over 60 percent of this amount, with the remainder supporting the construction or rehabilitation of sewer and storm water collection systems. EPA and the states use a uniform set of financial and environmental measures to help determine

efficient and effective use of CWSRF resources. Financial measures include, among others, return on federal investment, the pace at which available funds are loaned, and the sustainability of the fund. EPA regional officials conduct annual reviews of each state program to help ensure the fiscal integrity of the state programs. All programs are also subject annually to independent financial audits. To measure environmental outcomes of CWSRF-funded projects, in fiscal year 2005, EPA developed an electronic benefits reporting system that all 51 programs have agreed to use.

OCEANS

From Sea to Shining Sea: Priorities for Ocean Policy Reform.

Joint Ocean Commission, Report to the Senate, June 2006

http://jointoceancommission.org/press/press/release0613_assets/Sea%20Report.pdf

A bipartisan group of ten influential Senators have agreed to take action on comprehensive reform of the nation's ocean policy as the problems with our troubled seas continue to grow worse. The report, a national ocean policy action plan for Congress, developed at the Senators' request, was delivered to Capitol Hill by the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative and will serve as a guide for developing legislation and funding high-priority programs. The report calls for Congress to adopt a statement of national ocean policy that acknowledges in legislation the importance of oceans to the nation's economic and ecological health and establishes a framework for all other ocean legislation.

ENERGY

Siting Critical Energy Infrastructure: An Overview of Needs and Challenges.

White Paper Prepared by the Staff of the National Commission on Energy Policy, June 2006

http://www.energycommission.org/files/contentFiles/Siting%20Critical%20Energy%20Infrastructure_448851db5fa7d.pdf

This paper explores the infrastructure challenges and opportunities that will affect ongoing efforts to improve upon and modernize our nation's energy systems. To develop a more nuanced understanding of infrastructure siting issues and begin to elucidate realities on all sides of the debate, the Commission is sponsoring a series of workshops for later in 2006 and 2007. Initial workshops will focus on some of the resources and technologies that figure most prominently in current energy policy discussions: liquefied natural gas, electricity transmission, renewable energy (primarily wind and biofuels), nuclear power, and advanced coal technologies and carbon sequestration.

FAUNA-FLORA

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument: A Commitment To Good Stewardship Of Our Natural Resources.

White House factsheet, June 15, 2006

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/06/20060615-9.html>

The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument encompasses nearly 140,000 square miles of U.S. waters, including 4,500 square miles of relatively undisturbed coral reef habitat that is home to more than 7,000 species.

President George W. Bush, by signing a proclamation to designate the waters in this region a national monument, created the world's largest marine conservation area off the coast of the northern Hawaiian Islands in order to permanently protect the area's pristine coral reefs and unique marine species.

Interaction of the Onset of Spring and Elevated Atmospheric CO₂ on Ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia* L.) Pollen Production.

Christine A. Rogers, *et al.*, Harvard School of Public Health, June 2006

<http://www.ehponline.org/members/2006/8549/8549.pdf>

Increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide is responsible for climate changes that are having widespread effects on biological systems. One of the clearest changes is earlier onset of spring and lengthening of the growing season. The present study is designed to examine the interactive effects of timing of dormancy release of seeds with low and high atmospheric CO₂ on biomass, reproduction, and phenology in ragweed plants (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia* L.), which produce highly allergenic pollen.